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ABSTRACT

Recognizing the crucial role played by parents and family in literacy development, a program called "Family Focus: Reading and Learning Together" has published this packet designed to teach parents ways to use the newspaper to reinforce reading skills in a relaxed home setting. It contains suggestions and materials for four 90-minute programs to help parents encourage their children in grades one through three to read, talk, and think. Components of the packet are: (1) a leader's guide; (2) a parent brochure in camera-ready form suitable for reproduction in large numbers, describing activities for parents and children reading the newspaper together; (3) model letters to parents and to teachers, which can be adapted for local use; (4) a publicity flier for parents; (5) public service announcements for both newspapers and radio; (6) model programs on four different topics with sample agendas and step-by-step suggestions; (7) model statements to parents; (8) transparency masters; and (9) an evaluation card for leaders and an evaluation form for parents. (SR)

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FAMILY FOCUS

READING AND LEARNING TOGETHER

Packet

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Shirley Cupery, National Congress of Parents and Teachers
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June Million, National Association of Elementary School Principals
Kay O'Malley, The Home News/Korporate Kids, Clifton, N.J.
Colleen Rickert, Aurora Public Schools, Aurora, Colo.

Editor:
Kristen J. Amundson
Graphic designer:
Katherine Willis
Folder illustration:
Barbara Gibson

For additional information contact:

ANPA Foundation
The Newspaper Center
Box 17407 Dulles Airport
Washington, D.C. 20041
703/648-1000

International Reading Association
800 Barksdale Road
P.O. Box 8139
Newark, Del. 19714-8139
302/731-1600

FAMILY FOCUS

READING AND LEARNING TOGETHER

Grades One-Three

This project provides suggestions and materials for reading specialists or Newspaper in Education coordinators to use in conducting a 90-minute program for parents. These programs should help parents learn new ways to use the newspaper to encourage their children to read, talk and think. Educational research confirms the important role parents play in helping their children learn and use language. Parents often want information and advice on how they can encourage their children to read and express their thoughts clearly.

The newspaper is a source of reading material for both adults and children. Newspapers are available in many homes and contain information on a wide variety of subjects for people of all ages, interests and experiences. Newspapers are also convenient for parents to use in modeling reading behavior, encouraging conversation and extending children's awareness of people, places, things and events.

Newspapers are often considered most appropriate for experienced readers, but their use should not be limited. Although most children in grades one through three will not read the newspaper independently, they can benefit from shared reading activities with a parent or other interested adult. The activities in this project are designed to help parents understand how to use the newspaper to stimulate discussion, foster conversation and build on children's interests in people and events.

COMPONENTS

LEADERS' GUIDE

1 This guide provides resources for planning and carrying out special "Family Focus" parent programs. Conducted by members of local chapters of the International Reading Association and Newspaper in Education specialists, these programs will train parents to use the newspaper with their children. The focus of each program is family communication–using the newspaper as a source for reading and talking.

The programs described in this publication target families of children in first through third grade. Many of the activities can be used with nonreaders or early readers. Activities focus on developing spoken language–an important first step in reading.

The **Leaders' Guide** contains outlines for four sample 90-minute programs. Leaders may choose to use one of these programs or a combination of two or more. Leaders also may develop original programs. A key point for all leaders is to develop programs that meet the needs and interests of the parents in their audiences. Leaders should feel free to tailor-make Family Focus sessions in their own personal styles. The goal here is a successful presentation, one that will stimulate parents to repeat some of the learning activities at home with their children.

PARENT BROCHURE

2 ***Family Focus: Reading and Learning Together*** is a brochure describing activities for parents and children reading the newspaper together. The brochure includes activities that encourage parents and children to "Read Together," "Talk Together" and "Think Together." It also suggests activities that children may try on their own. The parent brochure included with this kit has been provided in camera-ready form suitable for reproduction in large numbers. When bound, it will become and eight-page brochure. At the close of the Family Focus program, each parent should receive a brochure to take home.

The parent brochure is located in the pocket folder.

MODEL LETTERS

3 Included are two model letters promoting the program to parents–one from the principal and one from the PTA–that can be adapted to local programs and sent home. Also included in this guide is a model letter to teachers, describing the purposes of the Family Focus program and its teaching techniques, in the hope that teachers will support the program and reinforce parents' efforts. (See pages 6 to 8 of this guide for model letters.)

PUBLICITY FLIER FOR PARENTS

4 This flier is designed to attract parents to the Family Focus programs. It includes room for listing the place and time of the Family Focus evenings, and can be easily duplicated by program organizers. (See page 9 of this guide for sample flier.)

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

5 Public service announcements for both newspapers and radio can be used to promote the Family Focus program. (See page 10 of this guide for sample public service announcements.)

MODEL PROGRAMS

Four different topics are presented in the leaders' guide: on helping parents to use photographs to promote conversation with their children, on helping parents select newspaper articles to read with their youngsters, on ways for parents to use newspapers to promote family conversation and on helping parents choose topics to interest their children in independent activities.

Included with the model programs is a sample agenda that session leaders can follow, plus step-by-step suggestions for running a successful Family Focus event. Each model program offers several activities to encourage parent participation, on the premise that parental enthusiasm during the session will spill over to the at-home activities that parents plan for their children. Model programs appear on pages 11-17.

MODEL STATEMENTS TO PARENTS

Included in the leaders' guide are model statements to parents, offered as a way to help Family Focus program leaders introduce and conclude the sessions they run. The statements reinforce the premises of Family Focus—that reading is worthwhile and important, and that children who see their parents reading will be more inclined to do so themselves. See pages 18-19.

TRANSPARENCY MASTERS

Three sample transparency masters are provided (pages 20-22), to help Family Focus program leaders add visual impact to their introductory and concluding remarks. Session leaders are encouraged to develop other transparencies to suit the needs of the programs they run.

EVALUATIONS

Evaluation Card

An evaluation card is located in the pocket folder. Family Focus program leaders are asked to return the card to ANPA Foundation. Information provided will help program organizers develop materials for future Family Focus events.

Evaluation Form

The evaluation form, located on page 24, should be duplicated and distributed to parents who attend Family Focus programs. The form is offered so program leaders can gain ideas and suggestions for future sessions.

NEWSPAPER COLUMNS

Two newspaper columns about Family Focus will be distributed to ANPA-member newspapers.

Sponsorship

"Family Focus" is sponsored by the American Newspaper Publishers Association Foundation, the International Reading Association, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers and the National Association of Elementary School Principals. The Canadian Daily Newspaper Publishers Association also has endorsed the program.

Program leaders

Committees of local/state/provincial councils of the International Reading Association and Newspaper in Education coordinators affiliated with the American Newspaper Publishers Association Foundation will organize the Family Focus programs in cooperation with local schools and/or PTAs. The sponsors should identify the program leader, most likely a reading specialist or the coordinator for Newspaper in Education programs from the local newspaper.

PLANNING GUIDE FOR PROGRAM LEADERS

- Several weeks before the Family Focus program is to take place, schedule meeting(s) with representatives of each of the sponsoring groups. Determine who will take various responsibilities for the meeting.
- Ask both the elementary school principal and the PTA president to be present at the Family Focus program to welcome participants. Ideally, both a reading specialist and a Newspaper in Education coordinator will be present, although either one alone could lead the session.
- Decide the topic of your program. This leaders' guide includes outlines for four different topics. Leaders may choose one topic, or make selections from two or more. Include this information in your publicity.
- Formulate a budget for your program. Determine who will cover expenses for duplicating publicity materials and parent brochures, and who will contribute funds for incidentals, including refreshments.
- Select a convenient time and place for the program. The best meeting locations have round tables and chairs large enough for adults to sit in comfortably. School resource rooms, libraries or media centers are ideal.
- Schedule the meeting for a time that is convenient for parents who would be willing and able to attend.
- Begin publicizing the program. Promote it in your newspaper, either through ads or articles or both. Adapt the enclosed public service announcements and send them to local radio stations. Call local television talk shows to schedule appearances by one or more members of the sponsoring organizations. Copy and distribute fliers to all parents of children in grades 1-3 of the sponsoring school. Post fliers in other locations where parents are likely to see them. Have the school principal and PTA president write a letter to parents (samples are enclosed) encouraging participation in the Family Focus program. Tell teachers about the program and ask for their cooperation. (Sample letter to teachers is enclosed.)
- Decide whether or not to pre-register participants. Although pre-registration makes planning easier, it may discourage last-minute attendance. If you will pre-register, decide who will be responsible for receiving and processing the forms.
- Determine the optimum size of the group. In a large school, you may need to hold two programs.
- Determine who will be responsible for refreshments, if any, what will be served and when it will be served.
- Assemble all the materials you will need for the program. These include:

___ One copy of the newspaper for each participant.

___ One copy of the brochure **"Family Focus: Reading and Learning Together"** for each participant.

___ Overhead projector and screen.

___ Optional materials as required by individual program leaders (bulletin board, markers, scissors, paste).

- Prepare an evaluation form and make sure you have enough copies for each participant. A sample evaluation form is included in this guide.
- Begin promptly and end on time.
- Work to create a relaxed, informal atmosphere.
- Thank all parents for participating.
- After the program is over, call or meet with other sponsoring groups to evaluate its success. Decide whether you will schedule additional programs.
- Let ANPA Foundation and the IRA know how your programs went. Please complete and return the evaluation postcard enclosed with this kit.

PARENT BROCHURE

2

Note: Although this leaders' guide refers to the Family Focus parent meetings as "programs," you may wish to call your local event a "Family Focus Day" or a "Family Focus Evening." Parents are likely to attend a meeting that will provide them with easy-to-use, enjoyable and interesting information on using the newspaper to help their children learn.

The Parent Brochure is located in the pocket folder.

3 MODEL LETTERS

MODEL LETTER TO TEACHERS

Dear Educator:

The (newspaper name) and your local reading council are sponsoring a Family Focus program on (date) at (location) from (time).

Family Focus: Reading and Learning Together is a national program designed to help parents learn new ways of working with their children to foster good reading habits and improved reading skills. The program is sponsored by the International Reading Association and the American Newspaper Publishers Association Foundation with the National Congress of Parents and Teachers and the National Association of Elementary School Principals.

As a teacher, you are a vital part of the Family Focus effort. During the session, parents will learn effective techniques for working with their children. The newspaper will be used as a primary resource; activities that are both enjoyable and educationally sound will be presented to parents as ideas for further efforts at home. You can reinforce the work parents are doing and answer questions that they might ask.

Please join us next (day of week) as we train parents in methods to use at home with their children. If you would like further information about Family Focus, please call (newspaper name and telephone number) or (reading council name and telephone number). Thanks so much for your help.

Sincerely,

MODEL LETTER TO PARENTS FROM PRINCIPALS

School letterhead

Date

Dear (name of school) parent:

It's my pleasure to invite you to an important program—**Family Focus: Reading and Learning Together**, planned for the parents of our first, second and third graders on (day of week, month, date, time) in (room number, if any) at (location). This program will offer practical advice and specific methods to help you help your child develop good reading habits at home by using the newspaper.

Since reading is the most basic skill for students–and is the foundation for all future learning–it needs to be reinforced often at home, especially in the early elementary years. **Family Focus** has been carefully designed by reading specialists to introduce parents to simple, enjoyable ways to complement the school's program and strengthen your child's reading skills. The newspaper, inexpensive and readily available, will be the reading material for the program.

Family Focus, planned to last about an hour-and-a-half and led by (name and title of leader), is aimed at all parents–whether this is your first child or you're a veteran elementary school parent. We'll all learn, and I'm quite sure you will enjoy it. Every parent attending will receive a resource brochure with solid suggestions for talking together, reading together, thinking together and for projects children can do on their own with the newspaper.

I look forward to seeing you on (day of meeting). Please contact me or (group leader or PTA leader) at (phone number) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

MODEL LETTER TO PARENTS FROM PTAs

Dear (name of school) parent:

As parents, we all want to know how we can help our children do better in school. We know that we have an important role to play in our children's learning–that we are our children's first and most important teachers.

To help us with that important responsibility, the (name of school) PTA is co-sponsoring a special program for parents on (date) at (time and place). **Family Focus: Reading and Learning Together** will show you simple things that you can do at home to help improve your child's reading skills. You'll learn practical, enjoyable and easy ways to use newspapers to talk together, read together and think together.

You'll also receive a brochure that explains other activities you can try at home with your children. Newspapers are used in most of the activities; they were selected for this program because they are inexpensive, readily available and contain something of interest to everyone–even young children.

We hope you'll join us for this hour-and-a-half event. If you have questions about this program, please call me at (telephone). Hope to see you there!

Sincerely,

PUBLICITY FLIER

4

PARENTS: HELP IMPROVE YOUR CHILD'S READING

A FREE PROGRAM TO SHOW YOU HOW TO USE THE NEWSPAPER TO IMPROVE YOUR CHILD'S READING SKILLS

- **Fun and easy-to-use activities**
- **Teacher-developed, parent-tested**
- **Use the newspaper to read together, think together, talk together**

Date:_____

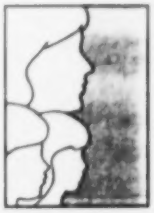
For more information, call:

_____

Time:_____

Place:_____

Family Focus: Reading and Learning Together is sponsored by the American Newspaper Publishers Association Foundation, the International Reading Association, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers and the National Association of Elementary School Principals. The Canadian Daily Newspaper Publishers Association has also endorsed the program.



PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

30-SECOND

Parents–do you want to help your children do better in school? A free program, **Family Focus: Reading and Learning Together**, will show you fun and easy ways to use the newspaper to help improve your child's reading skills. The program will be held at (LOCATION) on (DATE) at (TIME). For more information, call (TELEPHONE). That number again: (TELEPHONE).

60-SECOND

Parents–helping your children develop a love of reading may be the most important way to help them do better in school. Now a free program will show you ways you can use your newspaper to help improve your child's reading skills. The program is called **Family Focus: Reading and Learning Together**, and it will be held at (LOCATION) on (DATE) at (TIME). Every parent attending will receive a resource brochure with solid suggestions for talking together, reading together, thinking together and for projects children can do on their own with newspapers. These suggestions have been developed by teachers and parents, so they're enjoyable, easy *and* educationally sound.

Again, the **Family Focus** program will be held at (LOCATION) on (DATE) at (TIME). For more information, call (TELEPHONE). That's (TELEPHONE).

MODEL PROGRAMS

This leaders' guide includes outlines for four 90-minute programs. Each program focuses on a different aspect of children's language development.

Program Model 1
Getting the Picture

How parents can use photographs and other visual material from the newspaper to promote conversation and develop thinking skills.

Program Model 2
Reading Together

How parents can select newspaper articles to read with their children; how to encourage children to talk about what they have read in the newspaper.

Program Model 3
Talking Together

How to use the newspaper to spark family conversation and encourage children to express their ideas clearly.

Program Model 4
Exploring Topics

How to choose topics that interest children; how to use newspapers to stimulate curiosity and extend knowledge.

SAMPLE AGENDA

This model agenda presents a general outline that can be adapted for use with any Family Focus program included in this leaders' guide. In selecting activities to be used with a group, allow approximately 5-7 minutes for participants to complete the activity and more time for sharing. The size of the group will determine the amount of time needed for sharing information.

TIME	ACTIVITY	RESOURCES
15 minutes	Greetings and introductions Program overview	Program sponsors Program leaders Sample introductory statements Transparency 1 Transparency 2
10 minutes	Icebreaker activity	Samples enclosed
50 minutes	Using the newspaper with children at home	Leaders may choose activities from those suggested in the program models, or develop their own activities. Choose two or more activities suited to the needs and interests of the audience.
15 minutes	Summary	Sample concluding statement Transparency 3
	How to follow up	Parent Brochure **Family Focus: Reading and LearningTogether**
	Evaluation	Evaluation Form

MODEL PROGRAM 1
Getting the Picture

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Newspapers contain photographs and illustrations that can encourage children to develop ideas and stimulate conversation. In this program, parents will learn how to use the visual materials in newspapers to promote discussion and reading. Each participant should have a newspaper.

GETTING STARTED

Have parents work alone or with a partner. Direct them to scan the newspaper, finding photographs and illustrations. Then have them list the kinds of information included in these photographs and illustrations. The list might include:

- Popular entertainers
- Athletes
- Ordinary citizens
- Politicians
- Accidents
- Weather maps
- Household items
- Clothing
- Cars
- Food.

Have participants share their lists with a partner and talk about one or two pictures that most attracted their attention.

Then choose one or more of the following activities:

Activity 1

Ask parents to examine photographs of people in the newspaper and choose one that would most interest their child. (Point out that sports photography is often the most popular with children.) Have them identify the persons in the photograph and tell a partner why that person is newsworthy and why they selected this example for their child.

In the group, discuss ways to use this activity with children. Suggestions:

- Parents ask children to scan the newspaper and select an interesting photo. Parents ask children what they know about the people and why they selected this photo. Parents read the accompanying caption or article to the child and together they talk about ideas that are new.
- Children can cut the photo out of the newspaper, mount it on a larger piece of paper and write the name of the person or persons pictured on the paper. Children can talk about the people in the photograph and then dictate ideas to parents to write a story about the photograph. Older children can be encouraged to write their own stories about the photograph. These news stories can be displayed on the refrigerator, the door of the child's room or given to friends and relatives.

(Leaders should remind parents that the ideas children produce in writing are more important than complete accuracy in spelling and punctuation. Parents can make incidental observations about words the child knows how to spell, but should concentrate first on the ideas the child has to offer.)

Activity 2

Have parents draw a simple picture or a floor plan of their home and label each room. Have them scan the newspaper to find pictures (in advertisements or news photographs) of 10 items they have in their home. They can cut out these pictures and put them in the appropriate rooms on their floor plan.

Discuss how this activity could be used with children. Suggestions:

- Parents have children draw a picture of a room in their house. Children find ads that show pictures of things that might go in that room: "Can you find a bed? Can you find a TV?"

▮ Children choose pictures or drawings of one or two items they would like to add to the household and paste them in the appropriate places on their picture.

Activity 3

Parents select a newspaper photograph that shows action. They should cover the caption, so the photo can be analyzed visually, without benefit of the explanatory words. With a partner, have them look at the picture and talk about what is happening, then speculate about what happened before and after the photo was taken. Then ask them to read the caption and discuss ideas it adds to their interpretation.

Discuss how action photos can be used to stimulate discussion. Suggestions:

▮ Parents should encourage children to react spontaneously to the picture before making comments or pointing out additional information to the youngsters. Then parents can explain that the caption adds more information. Parents can read the caption or ask their child to read the caption to them.

▮ Parents can ask other questions about the photo:
– "What do you think happened before this picture was taken? What will happen next?"
—"What would you do if you were there?"
– "What do you think the people are saying?"
– "How do you think the people feel?"
– "What picture might they print about this incident in tomorrow's newspaper?"

▮ Parents can involve even very young children in this activity. Ask children to tell you the names of things they recognize in the photograph.

▮ Play a game to improve your powers of observation. Parents and children should carefully look at the picture for a minute or two. Then cover the picture and take turns telling each other everything they can remember. (Children are often better at this game than their parents, so they may request this game often.)

▮ Children can draw pictures of what happened before or after the photograph. They can write their own stories or captions for their pictures, then share their work with family or friends.

MODEL PROGRAM 2
Reading Together

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Parents play the most important role in helping their children develop a lifelong interest in reading and in encouraging their children to read for pleasure and information. In this session, parents will learn how important it is to read with their children and will develop ways to use the newspaper to support their family reading.

GETTING STARTED

Discuss how important it is for parents and children to read together. Point out that parents have a tremendous influence on their children's reading patterns. When parents and schools work together, children can develop a love of reading that will last a lifetime.

Identify several advantages of using the newspaper for reading activities at home, and invite comments from the audience about the role of the newspaper in their reading at home. Advantages might include:

▮ Convenience

▮ Variety of subjects - something for everyone

▮ A way to encourage children to learn about subjects that are new

- Photographs and illustrations to stimulate interest
- When parents read the newspaper, children begin to think of reading as an "adult" activity–it becomes more attractive.

Each participant should have a newspaper to use in one or more of the following activities.

Activity 1

Have parents scan the newspaper to locate a story or report that would interest their child. Have them meet with partners or small groups to discuss their choices, explaining how they would introduce the item to the child and indicating which parts of the story they would read aloud.

Invite participants to share their ideas with the group.

Discuss ways to adapt this activity to use with children. Suggestions:

- Parents read a short article about a local event or organization. Children should retell the story in their own words.
- Parents read an article about their children's favorite sports team. Or they look for an article about a boys' or girls' team from the high school nearest to their home.

Activity 2

Have parents turn to the comics in the newspaper. Do their children read the comics? Which comics are their children's favorites?

Have parents discuss ways to use the comics to stimulate reading with their child. Suggestions:

- Have children choose a comic they enjoy. Cut off the captions and have children write new ones.
- Encourage children to read a favorite comic strip every day and talk about what is happening in each episode.
- Select a time when it is convenient for family members to be together. Take turns reading and talking about favorite comics.
- Cut out favorite comics or comics children think others would enjoy. Paste them in scrapbooks, include them in letters, or post them on family bulletin boards or the refrigerator door.

Activity 3

Have parents read a local story, then talk with a partner or a small group about ways the story could affect their family.

Discuss why it is important to talk with children about local news affecting their lives (elections, school news, community events). Invite volunteers to talk about how they might discuss this story or other local news with their children.

Activity 4

Many newspapers include special features for young readers. If your newspaper has such a feature, use examples of recent articles to remind parents to watch for it and read it with their children. Other information that parents may want to share with their children:

- School news
- School lunch menus
- Information about children's athletic leagues
- Announcements of free programs
- Church or religious organization events
- Weather reports.

MODEL PROGRAM 3
Talking Together

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Family conversation helps children develop thinking skills and spoken language. It also offers them a chance to explore their thoughts with people who care about them. In this session, parents will learn how talking helps their children's language development and will explore new ways to use the newspaper to promote family conversation.

GETTING STARTED

Discuss the importance of parents and children talking together and the benefits of these conversations for both children and adults. Invite members of the audience to tell how they encourage conversation with their children.

Identify advantages of using the newspaper to stimulate discussion with children. These might include:

- The wide variety of items (comics, movie reviews, television listings, letters to the editor, etc.) included in a typical newspaper will probably include at least one item of interest to every member of the family.
- Newspapers help children learn about important current issues.
- Newspapers often provide more in-depth coverage of events than television or radio. Children can see that there are many sides to an issue.

Invite comments from the audience about recent items in the newspaper that have sparked conversations in their homes.

Each participant should have a newspaper to use in one or more of the following activities.

Activity 1

Have parents scan newspaper headlines and photographs about people in the news. Ask them to identify two or more people they think their children would find interesting. Have them discuss with a partner why these individuals would appeal to their children. Would these individuals have the same appeal for adults?

Suggestions for adapting this activity to use with children:

- With the group, develop questions to stimulate and direct conversation with children. These might include:

— "Why is this person's picture in the newspaper?"
— "Do you think the person would be pleased to see this picture?"
— "What can you tell about the person from this picture?"
— "If this person came to our house, what would you say?"

- Highlight a "person of the week." Family members can take turns choosing someone from newspaper stories and pictures. Then everyone can gather information from newspaper articles, TV and radio reports to learn more about this person's activities.

Activity 2

Mention that newspaper stories often provide opportunities for readers to explore a range of emotions–enjoyment, sadness, anger, sympathy, and so on. Have parents scan the newspaper to find two incidents that evoke different emotions, then discuss the examples with a partner.

Suggestion for adapting this activity to use with children:

- Have parents look for pictures that show people's expressions. Ask children how each person feels. Look for pictures that make children feel happy and sad. Then ask questions like, "What makes you happy? What makes you sad? Why does this picture make you feel that way?"

Activity 3

Point out the weather page as a source of ideas for conversation. Ask parents to discuss how they use the weather page. Do they check to see the weather in other parts of the country?

Have parents make a list of people their children know in different parts of the country.

Suggestions for adapting this activity for use with children:

- With their children, look at the weather map to see what effect the weather will have on the activities of their relatives or friends.
- Look at the weather forecast and ask children to select appropriate clothes for school or play.

MODEL PROGRAM 4
Exploring Topics

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The newspaper offers something for everyone–stories about sports, entertainment, politics, food, human interest, people, fashion, books, games, money and so on. Newspaper stories often include the latest information on these subjects.

Choosing topics that appeal to children and reading about them over time is a way to encourage children to read the newspaper, extend their knowledge and develop new ideas and interests.

This program will help parents identify ways to explore topics in depth by using the newspaper. The specific topics and activities will, of course, be determined by the interests and abilities of the children, as well as the material available in the newspaper.

GETTING STARTED

Have parents identify topics or themes that interest their children. Record these suggestions on the chalkboard or on large sheets of paper. Working alone or in groups, parents should look through the newspaper to find articles that relate to those topics.

This activity should help parents realize that articles on a given topic may appear in many sections of the newspaper. Articles about pets, for example, might appear in the following places:

- Classified ads (lost and found, pets for sale)
- Community events (dog or cat shows)
- Local news (problems with pets in the community)
- Feature stories
- Columns about pets or animals
- TV listings (programs about animals).

Discuss ways parents can encourage children to use the newspaper to sustain interest in a specific topic. Parents can:

– Skim the newspaper and point out articles on this subject to their children
– Take time to read and talk together about the articles
– Help the child develop a file or scrapbook of information
– Take the child to the library to find other information on the topic
– Look through the TV listings for programs on the subject.

Parents also should remember to allow children to assume some of the responsibility for locating information and deciding what to do with it.

Activity 1

Choose a topic such as pets. Discuss ways parents could use information in the newspaper to help their children explore this topic. Suggestions might include:

- Develop charts, listing advantages and disadvantages of various kinds of pets. (Cost of pet, cost to keep pet, space required, special care, etc.)
- Have children use their imaginations in discussing pets. "What would happen if we had an elephant for a pet?"
- If children have a pet, they might discuss how the weather may affect the pet. Children can learn responsibility for caring for a pet through some of these discussions.

Activity 2

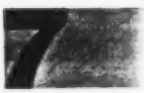
Have parents scan the newspaper for information about the community. The newspaper often includes listings of free events that may be of special interest to families.

Families might want to keep a list of places in their community they would like to visit. Then one day, parents could pull out the list and ask their children to choose a place for a family outing.

Activity 3

Have parents scan the newspaper for science information that may interest their children (space, robots, dinosaurs, the human body, weather). With a partner or in small groups, parents should discuss why these science topics would interest their children. Have the group share ideas on ways parents can help children learn more about the science ideas presented in the newspaper.

Parents might help their children develop a personal science notebook or journal for clippings and their own ideas about science. Pictures and headlines could be made into a collage.



MODEL STATEMENTS TO PARENTS

These statements include suggestions for ways to introduce and conclude parent programs. Leaders should use these statements as background information, adapting their specific comments to the needs and interests of the audience.

SAMPLE:

GREETINGS AND INTRODUCTIONS

Be sure to introduce yourself, your co-presenter, the school's principal and PTA representatives at the beginning of the program. A good idea is to ask all "official" representatives of the four sponsoring groups to say a few words.

To introduce this program, you might ask parents to identify one thing that would help their children do well in school. Most will probably say, "a love of reading." Explain: children who enjoy reading can learn more about any topic that interests them. Parents can help their children develop this love of reading. Reading books to them often helps instill the reading habit. Another way is by reading the daily newspaper to and with your child. When your kids see you reading, they learn many important things:

- Reading is worthwhile and important
- Reading is something adults do every day
- People sometimes read to learn something
- Sometimes people read things just for fun.

As your children watch you read the newspaper, they'll also learn that people respond to what they've read in a variety of ways–they read things aloud to others, they talk about the ideas, they invite others to read an interesting article, they laugh about things that are funny, they clip and file important information, they make telephone calls and sometimes they write letters.

SAMPLE:

ICEBREAKER ACTIVITIES

- Have parents look through the newspaper and find an article they think their child would enjoy. Have parents tell about the articles and why they would interest their children as they introduce themselves to the group.
- Or participants might introduce themselves to the group by telling which section of the newspaper they read first.
- If the group is large and many participants do not know each other, develop a scavenger hunt–e.g., "Find a picture of an Olympic athlete," "Find a map of Missouri," etc. Divide the group into teams. The first team to find all the items is the winner. (This activity is also fun for children.)

SAMPLE:

STATEMENTS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF READING AT HOME

Here are some reasons why reading at home with your children is so important.

- Parents who read to and with their children show them that reading is important.
- Parents are a key factor in developing a child's lifelong interest in reading. Parents can help their children develop the habit of reading.
- Parents who use a variety of reading materials (newspapers, books, magazines, recipes, directions, etc.) with their children provide experiences and vocabulary necessary for successful reading.

SAMPLE:

STATEMENTS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF TALKING WITH CHILDREN AT HOME

- Conversation with children stimulates their already natural curiosity. It answers their questions, encourages them to ask more and boosts their appetite for learning and their vocabulary.
- Children learn about themselves and others through conversation.
- Talking with children helps them clarify their ideas and helps them think more clearly.
- When children talk with adults, they learn new words. They also may gather ideas that will help them develop reading and writing skills.

SAMPLE:

STATEMENTS ABOUT USING THE NEWSPAPER AS A SOURCE OF READING MATERIAL

- Newspapers present information on a wide variety of topics. There is something to interest nearly everyone.
- Newspapers are inexpensive, convenient sources of information.
- People read newspapers for different purposes–to learn something new, to check a fact, for self-improvement, for financial planning or for enjoyment. Children who see their parents reading the newspaper can see many different uses for reading.
- The variety of stories in a newspaper can encourage family discussion on a wide range of topics.
- By reading the newspaper, children can learn more about local, state, national and world affairs.

SAMPLE:

CONCLUDING STATEMENT

We've tried only a few ideas in this session. The brochure **Family Focus: Reading and Learning Together** includes several more activities that you can do at home with your children.

I hope you've begun to see that newspapers can be used for children who are learning to read, as well as with experienced readers. Whatever your child's reading ability and interest, you can use the newspaper to help encourage reading.

Here are some general suggestions to make your newspaper time more enjoyable:

- Try to plan a regular time for reading the newspaper. Let your kids see you reading the newspaper. Talk with them about what you're reading–the weather, the TV listings, a book review, an ad.
- Read aloud articles that may interest your children. Talk with your children about articles in the newspaper.
- If your newspaper includes a feature for young readers, watch for it and read it with your child. Point out examples of children's art and writing. Encourage your child to illustrate and write about ideas in the children's section.
- Ask your kids to find articles that interest them. Talk with your kids about their interests.

TRANSPARENCY MASTERS

A collage of newspaper headlines, in a variety of topics and type sizes, emphasizes the range and wide appeal of content in the newspaper.

Prime Minister in Washington
Police dog rescues man from
MEASLE CASES ON THE WANE, OFFICIALS SAY
SUPERGLUE AIDS EYE SURGERY
A recent report in the Medical Digest describes a new break
Beaver plays hide and seek
A WOMAN WHO PLANTS FORESTS FOR TOMORROW
Time to study the bear facts
The common black bear has been the subject of extensive
Creative snacks for kids
Nutritionist suggest for healthy teeth and bone building in
View is obstructed
Ski team veteran calling it quits
Local students tops in Olympics for the Mind
Your editorial, A fit mind in a fit body (Feb. 6), was a classic

Excerpted from *POKOLOGAN—EXPRESSWAYS II* Reading Program.
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Use the **Family Focus** logo to stimulate conversation about the importance of parents and children reading together.

Use to conclude your **Family Focus** program.

READING THE NEWSPAPER AT HOME

- Read the newspaper regularly
- Talk about what you're reading
- Read aloud to your children
- Read together
- Let children choose what they want to read

EVALUATIONS 9

FAMILY FOCUS EVALUATION CARD

There is an evaluation card located in the pocket folder.

Please return it to ANPA Foundation after you have held your first **Family Focus** event.

FAMILY FOCUS EVALUATION FORM

Please use this form to let us know your thoughts about the Family Focus program. Return it to the person who conducted the session. The ideas and suggestions you provide will be used in planning future **Family Focus** events.

How did you hear about the Family Focus Program?

(Check all that apply)
_____Notices from your PTA, school principal or reading council
_____Newspaper articles or advertisements
_____Radio or television announcements
_____Other (please specify) _____

Do you plan to use any of the ideas and activities suggested by the Family Focus program leader?

Yes No

Which ideas did you find most interesting or helpful?

Please indicate your overall impression of the Family Focus program you attended. (check one):

Excellent Very Good Average Fair Poor

What suggestions do you have about the use of newspapers by parents and young people that might be included in a Family Focus program?

ON THEIR OWN

Here are some activities your children can try on their own.

1. Have your child cut out pictures of faces, clothing, hands, and feet and then arrange them to create funny people.

2. Ask your child to find an article about an interesting place to visit in your community. Then talk about what you would need to bring if you visited, how you would dress and what you could do.

3. Have your child cut out letters from the newspaper to spell his or her name. Then paste them on a sign or poster to display. Your child might also try to spell the names of other people in the family, perhaps making a place-mat for each.

4. Ask your child to pretend your family is moving. Find pictures of things you might want to include in your new apartment or house.

5. Challenge your child to look through the food ads to find products that could be combined into a new and unusual sandwich. (Or suggest coming up with a new horrible-tasting sandwich!)

FAMILY FOCUS

READING AND LEARNING TOGETHER

PARENT BROCHURE

TO THE PARENT

Like many parents today, you may often wonder if you could do something at home to reinforce what your child learns in school. Experts agree that children learn best when parents are interested and involved in their children's education. Many parents have found that reading and looking through the newspaper with their children makes at-home learning both enjoyable and effective. Seeing a parent read the newspaper every day motivates a child to want to do the same–read and learn.

The newspaper can be both an inexpensive source of information for you and a rich resource for enjoyable learning activities with your child. The suggestions in this booklet show you how to use the newspaper to:

- Build your child's love of reading
- Reinforce what's taught in school
- Enjoy a special time with your child
- Learn more about your child's interests.

THINK TOGETHER

1. Have your child choose an object pictured in the newspaper and describe it to you. See if you can correctly identify it based on your child's description. Switch roles and repeat.

2. Pretend your child has money to spend at the grocery store. Cut out prices for different foods: meats, fruits, vegetables and breads. Help your child find at least two items in each group that your family might enjoy. Together, total your "purchases." How much money did you "spend"?

3. Ask your child to cut out a picture of a famous athlete, movie star, politician or other person he or she would like to meet. Ask, "What would you say to this person? What do you think the person would say to you?"

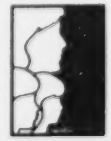
4. Find a story or picture of a group of people who need help (for example, victims of a fire or flood, the homeless, people in a hospital). Talk about ways your family might help by spending time, sharing talents or even contributing money.

5. Read through the lost-and-found advertisements. Choose an interesting ad and ask your child to draw a picture of the item it describes. Or help your child think of a classified ad to put in the newspaper: "Do you have some old toys to sell? Is there a job you could offer to do for people? (Walking dogs? Watering plants?)"

6. Find pictures of people of all ages. With your child, imagine what life was like for these people in the past. Imagine what their lives might be like in the future.

7. Talk with your child about families. Who is in your family? Do you have neighbors or friends that you think of as part of your extended family? Have your child choose an article or picture that every member of your family might enjoy.

8. Look through the comics and have your child choose a favorite character. Ask, "How are you like this character? How are you different?"



watch. Ask, "Why did you choose this program for the whole family? What show would you choose to watch by yourself?" Look for ads about upcoming programs. Ask, "What do you think that show will be about? Do you think it will be fun to watch?"

4. Read aloud a short article about an event or organization in your area. Have your child retell the story in his or her own words.

5. Turn to the sports page. Read an article about your child's or your family's favorite team. Or look for an article about a boys' or girls' team from the high school nearest to your home.

6. Find an announcement in the newspaper about a free event in your community. Decide whether you and your child would like to attend.

7. Have your child cut out the "cents off" coupons from the newspaper. Ask, "Can you tell me what this item is used for?" Sort the coupons into categories–cleaning products, snacks, breakfast cereals and so on. As you make out your shopping list, have your child select the coupons you will need.

8. Using the newspaper's food section, choose a recipe with your child. Prepare it together, asking your child to help you read the directions. Then serve it to family or friends.

HELPFUL HINTS

- Newspapers are great for kids of all ages. Even young children enjoy photographs and comics. Early readers can read the large print in headlines and ads. And what child doesn't enjoy just talking with a parent? Special time alone together will go a long way to promote positive attitudes toward learning.
- This brochure includes activities that will help you talk together, read together and think together. Try some activities from each group. Some days your child may be more interested in reading, while other days a "talk together" activity may be more fun.
- Your understanding of your child's interests will help you select activities that will be most appealing to your child.
- Newspapers can help build the habit of daily reading in your child. Try to read aloud to your child every day. Ask grandparents, neighbors or older brothers and sisters to help, perhaps suggesting a comic strip or a short article your child might enjoy. Sometimes ask your child to read something to you.
- You may want to scale down the newspaper with young children by using only one section at a time.
- Sometimes stapling newspaper pages together along the fold (so it opens like a large book) makes it easier for small children to handle.
- Show off the results of your child's efforts–it's another way to reinforce your "work" together. Many families have a permanent "art gallery" on the refrigerator door, but you might also encourage your child to share projects with grandparents, friends and neighbors.
- Establish a comfortable place for your newspaper activities. Make clean-up a regular part of your newspaper routine.
- Exploring a newspaper should be fun, not an at-home "assignment." If your child shows no interest today, try another day.

TALK TOGETHER

1. Look through the newspaper with your child. Ask your child to find examples of:

- "Foods I like"
- "Clothes I like to wear"
- "Toys I like to play with"
- "Animals I like."

Talk about each selection: "Why is a cat your favorite animal?" Tell your child about things *you* like and why.

2. Find a newspaper picture that interests both of you. Tell your child, in story form, about what happened in the picture. Stop occasionally and ask, "Then what do you think happened?" Ask your child to make up a different story. Or talk about what might have happened before or after the picture was taken.

3. Cut out some favorite comics. Cut the captions off and ask your child to tell you a story about the pictures. Ask questions like, "Did something like that ever happen to you?" and "What do you think happens next?" Or cut the comic strip into individual pictures and ask your child to put them in order, showing what happened first, second and third.

4. Help children learn more about work and the variety of jobs available by looking for pictures of people performing different jobs. Talk about what's involved in different jobs. Point out that most jobs can be done by either men or women. Search for pictures of jobs that various members of the family have or would like to have. Ask, "What kind of work would you like to do when you grow up?" and "Why?"

5. Look for pictures that show people's facial expressions and emotions. Ask your child how each person feels. Then ask questions like, "What makes you happy? What makes you sad?" Look for pictures that make your child feel happy and sad. Ask, "Why does this picture make you feel that way?"

6. Have your child draw a picture of a room in your house. Find ads that show pictures of things that might go in that room. Ask, "Can you find a bed? Can you find a TV?"

7. Look for a picture of your child's favorite sport or a favorite athlete. Talk together about sports you both enjoy.

8. Look for a picture of something your child might like to give as a gift. Ask questions like, "Do you think Grandma would like it?" Have your child write or dictate a letter to this person, describing the gift and why it was selected.

READ TOGETHER

1. Read the newspaper's weather forecast to your child. Look for pictures that illustrate different weather conditions. Ask your child to find pictures of clothing that could be worn in different kinds of weather. Look at the forecast for tomorrow and help your child select appropriate clothes to wear. Or use the weather map to learn more about weather in other places, for example, "What is the weather like where Grandpa lives?"

2. Use the newspaper to learn more about opposites–win/lose, rich/poor, night/day, happy/sad. Find as many opposites as you can, using both words and pictures. Choose a pair of opposites like "night/day" and find pictures of things that happen in the daytime or at night.

3. Read the TV listings together. Help your child choose a program for the whole family to

Watch for Family Reading Program

Parents reading with their children in order to reinforce reading skills in a relaxed setting is the aim of a new program, Family Focus: Reading and Learning Together. Co-sponsored by the American Newspaper Publishers Association Foundation (ANPA Foundation), International Reading Association (IRA), National PTA and NAESP, the program is targeted for children in first through third grades and will begin in the fall of 1988.

Family Focus is designed to help parents learn new—and readily accessible—ways to encourage reading at home. Newspapers will be used as reading materials, because they are available everywhere, are inexpensive, and have been shown to be effective teaching tools of children of all ages.

The program calls for parents to be invited to meetings, probably at local schools, where reading association members and local newspaper representatives will explain simple—and fun—ways to encourage reading skills at home with children.

Newspaper representatives will include Newspaper in Education (NIE) specialists, who already work closely with schools through the Newspaper in Education program.

Preparations for the Family Focus program begin with IRA members and newspaper representatives. Representatives of the two groups will jointly plan programs using curriculum materials developed by reading and newspaper specialists. School principals and PTAs will be contacted and, if they agree, programs will take place in elementary schools. Family Focus kits will include a training manual, parent resource brochure, flier for teachers, ready-to-go promotional letters for principals and PTAs, sample press releases and public service announcements.

—*Convention News*, National Association of Elementary School Principals, April 19, 1988.

Phylliss J. Adams, President of the IRA, Ignites New Interest in Reading With Family Focus

We all realize the crucial role played by parents and family in literacy development. IRA has actively promoted parent involvement for many years, with outstanding success. We recognize, however, that there is much more that can be done. Consequently, an exciting new project is in the initial stages of development.

This new project, called Family Focus: Reading and Learning Together, will be co-sponsored by IRA and the American Newspaper Publishers Association Foundation, along with the National Congress of Parents and Teachers and the National Association of Elementary School Principals.

Family Focus: Reading and Learning Together is conceptualized as a three-year plan, with the first year focusing on children in grades one through three. In subsequent years, the project would by broadened to include upper elementary children, and perhaps preschoolers, as well as adults.

The target date for the kick-off of Family Focus: Reading and Learning Together is October 1, 1988. Be watching for further details of this exciting project in coming issues of Reading Today.

—*Reading Today*, February-March 1988.

National PTA Co-sponsors New Family Focus Program

Shirley Cupery, secretary of the National PTA, attended the 1988 Newspaper in Education Conference, May 18-20, in Atlanta, Georgia. The conference was sponsored by the American Newspaper Publishers Association Foundation. National PTA is a co-sponsor of the Foundation's new reading program entitled "Family Focus: Reading and Learning Together." The program, which teaches parents how to use the newspaper to improve their children's reading habits and skills, will be launched in schools in October 1988.

—*Board Briefs*, National PTA, June-July 1988

Four Groups to Organize "Family Focus"

New collaboration holds great promise

Teaching parents to teach their children through newspapers is the thrust of a new program called "Family Focus: Reading and Learning Together," which will be launched in October 1988.

Family Focus is co-sponsored by the American Newspaper Publishers Association Foundation, the International Reading Association, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers and the National Association of Elementary School Principals.

The program is designed to help parents learn new ways of working with their children to foster good reading habits and improved reading skills. Newspapers are the key to the program because they have been shown to be effective teaching tools for children of all ages.

Parents will be invited to attend a meeting, probably at their local school, where reading association members and NIE specialists will train them in methods to use in working with their children at home. One meeting a year will be planned at first, but participating schools later will be encouraged to schedule several sessions a year.

Children in first through third grade are the intended audience during the first year of an envisioned three-year plan. In the second and third years, older students will be added.

According to Judy Hines, ANPA Foundation's executive vice president, "Family Focus is an exciting new challenge for NIE. Through NIE Week and the Celebration of Citizenship, the Foundation has built solid working relationships with the IRA, the PTA and NAESP. Now we have another way to cement those relationships in communities across the nation."

A team of experts from the IRA and ANPA Foundation has prepared the curriculum materials. A parent resource brochure also has been developed to describe ways parents can reinforce techniques learned in the workshops, and to offer suggestions for additional resources to use.

Other materials for the first year include:

- A flier for teachers that describes the purposes of the parent program and its teaching techniques, so that teachers can reinforce the parents' efforts.
- A series of model letters from principals and the PTA promoting the program to parents.
- Public service announcements and advertisements for newspapers and possibly radio.
- Two newspaper columns, one by a public figure and one by an educator, to be distributed to all ANPA-member newspapers.

—*NIE Update*, January/February 1988.